

## **Chapter 5**

### **Consultation and Coordination**

#### **Public Participation**

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) planning regulations require a process that is open to public involvement. Early in the planning process there was opportunity for public involvement for identification of issues and development of the planning criteria. There were also opportunities for the public to review draft planning documents and now there is an opportunity to file protests before planning decisions are approved. A Planning Analysis/Environmental Assessment (PA/EA) may be released as either a Draft or a Proposed PA/EA. To maximize public involvement, BLM chose to release a Draft PA/EA for Meadowood Farm. When a Draft PA/EA is released, the BLM seeks public comments before preparing a Proposed PA/EA. After considering public comments, the Draft may be modified before a Proposed PA/EA is released. A Proposed PA is subject to a public 30-day protest period and a 60-day Governor's consistency review. After the Governor's consistency review and resolution of any protests, the PA/EA may be approved.

A Notice of Intent to Prepare Meadowood Farm's PA/EA was published in the Federal Register on May 1, 2001. The notice was then amended to correct the final date for submission of comments as June 27, 2001. That correction was published in the Federal Register on June 22, 2001. The notices invited public participation in development of issues and planning criteria through June 27, 2001. A public meeting was held in Lorton, Virginia on May 16, 2001. Approximately 80 people attended the meeting and all commented.

Upon distribution of the Draft PA/EA, public comments were accepted during a 30-day review period. Comments were considered and this Proposed PA/EA was prepared. It is being released for a 30-day protest period and has been sent to the Governor for a 60-day consistency review. The Approved PA/EA and Decision Record will be prepared after any protests and/or inconsistencies have been resolved.

Copies of this Proposed PA/EA have been furnished to the Lorton public library. Copies will also be sent to all persons on the existing mailing list and anyone who requests a copy to review. In addition, the following agencies and organizations will be sent a copy of the Proposed PA/EA, along with a request to review the document.

#### **Federal Agencies**

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Norfolk District

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,  
Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge

Environmental Protection Agency

U.S. Geological Survey, Reston Office

**Virginia State Agencies**

Secretary of Natural Resources

Department of Historic Resources, State  
Historic Preservation Officer

Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

Department of Forestry

Department of Conservation and Recreation

Division of State Parks

Department of Environmental Quality

Virginia Marine - Resource Commission

**Fairfax County Agencies**

Office of the County Executive

County Archaeological Services

Fairfax County Urban Forestry Division

Fairfax County Parks and Recreation

**Regional Agencies**

Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority

Northern Virginia Soil and Water  
Conservation District

## **Comments and Responses**

Comments on the Draft PA/EA were received in individual letters, form letters, and petitions. During the Draft PA/EA comment period, a public meeting was held on May 22, 2002, at Gunston Elementary School in Lorton, Virginia. Rudiger and Green Reporting Service from Fairfax, Virginia recorded the meeting. Of the 109 people who attended the meeting, 29 provided oral comments. Individuals who spoke at the public meeting were requested to submit their comments in writing; in addition the transcript from the meeting was treated as written comments. A copy of the transcript from the public meeting and all of the original written comments received are on file at the Eastern States Office, 7450 Boston Boulevard, Springfield, Virginia 22153.

In addition to comments received from individuals, comments were provided by the following state, county and private organizations:

Academy of Model Aeronautics  
Audubon Naturalist Society  
Belmont Bay Community Association, Inc.  
Birders World  
Board of Supervisors, Mt. Vernon District  
Congressmen (representing their respective districts)  
Commonwealth of Virginia  
    House of Delegates  
    Department of Conservation and Recreation  
    Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

Department of Historic Resources  
Department Conservation and Recreation, Division of Natural Heritage  
Fairfax County Park Authority  
Department of Planning and Zoning  
Department of the Army  
Fairfax County Federation of Citizens Associations  
Friends of Mason Neck State Park  
Gunston-Wiley Civic Association  
Mason Neck Horse Coalition  
Mason Neck Citizen Association  
Mount Vernon Council of Citizens Association  
Northern Virginia Control Line Association  
Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority  
Northern Virginia Radio Control Model Aircraft Club  
Northern Virginia Regional Commission  
Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District  
Northern Virginia Therapeutic Riding Program

Many of the comments received were “position or opinion statements.” Many of these were expressed in petitions or form letters supporting continuation or discontinuation of a particular land use, or expressed a like or dislike for a particular activity or land use. Generally, these statements offered little in the way of substantive information to support their position or opinion. All of the comments were analyzed by a systematic, objective, visible, and traceable process. All comments received were assigned a number, and the comments were reviewed and categorized by topic(s) addressed. To further clarify, an individual’s comment could appear under more than one topic, depending on the number of topics addressed in the submission.

The list of topics under which comments were assigned is not the same as the topics addressed in the Meadowood Farm Plan. To more accurately categorize comments, a broader range of topics was developed based on comments received. Topics to which comments were assigned were:

I. Plan in General

II. Natural Environment

- A. Air
- B. Cultural Resources
- C. Visual Resources
- D. Soils
- E. Water Quality
- F. Riparian/Wetlands
- G. Ponds
- H. Wildlife
  - 1. General
  - 2. Listed Species

- 3. Invasive Species
  - I. Vegetation
    - 1. Forests
    - 2. Pastures
    - 3. Hayfields
    - 4. Invasive Species
  - J. Land Preservation
  - K. Environmental Partnerships
- III. Recreation
- A. Motorized Passenger Use
  - B. Motorized Hobby Use
    - 1. Tethered
    - 2. Radio Controlled
    - 3. Noise
    - 4. Availability of Suitable Area
  - C. Non-motorized Passenger Use (Bicycles)
  - D. Swimming
  - E. Trails - Pedestrian Use/Hiking
  - F. Camping
  - G. Fishing
  - H. Hunting
  - I. Dog Park/Dogs Allowed
  - J. Multi-Use Trails
  - K. Wildlife Viewing
  - L. Partnerships
- IV. Socio/Economic
- A. Social
  - B. Economics
  - C. Transportation
  - D. Traffic
- V. Equines
- A. Boarding
  - B. Wild Horses and Burros (WH&B)
  - C. Partnerships
  - D. Trail Use
- VI. Environmental Education
- A. Interpretive Trails
  - B. Facilities
- VII. Other - Not in the Realm of the Plan

To avoid repetition, similar comments were grouped and answered with a single response. In this Proposed Plan the comments have been responded to in two ways: 1) they are responded to in the following discussion, or 2) if the comment pointed out a data gap or error within the body of the document, the comment was responded to by correcting the error or supplying additional data in the Plan.

When reviewing the comments we have purposely avoided citing the number of comments opposed to or favoring a particular action, the number of signatures on petitions, the number of petitions received, or the number of form letters received. Land-use decisions made by the BLM are based on the best available data, public input and the expertise of the interdisciplinary team, not on the number of commenters favoring one land use over another. As was stated at public meetings and in the various communications inviting public comment, substantive comments were being sought, but this was not a plebiscite in favor of or against the various land and resource uses being considered on Meadowood Farm.

Following is a list of the comments and the responses:

## **PLAN IN GENERAL**

Comment: All actions on Meadowood Farm should be in compliance with the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act of 1988 and other regional and local statutes. The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act should be included in the list of statutes in Chapter 1.

Response: Prior to implementing an action, the BLM will work with all appropriate state, county and local agencies to insure the action is in compliance with the appropriate statutes. BLM's land-use activities will meet or exceed, but not be less than, guidelines recommended by regional, state and local statutes. The Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act is a state and not a federal statute, and therefore it is not included in the list of federal statutes.

Comment: The Plan lacks specifics to where, when and how much, and merges plan level (land-use plan level) with project level (activity planning level) actions.

Response: At the land-use plan level the goal is to identify those land uses that would be allowed. The land uses identified may or may not occur and will be dependent on budget and staffing needs. The "how much" of a particular use that may be allowed is based on a Reasonable Foreseeable Development (RFD) Scenario developed by the Interdisciplinary Team. The land use that occurs can be less than the amount indicated but not more, unless a plan modification is completed. The where and when a specific land use would be allowed will be determined at the activity planning level. Admittedly, the line between what constitutes a "land use" and what is an "activity" is not always clear.

Comment: The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is not valid because magnitudes of adverse environmental impacts are not stated and serious analysis has not been conducted.

Response: Factors considered in determining significant impacts on the quality of the human environment are set forth in 40 CFR 1508.27. No data was found or submitted that indicates the Proposed Action or alternatives, if implemented, would have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment. Both adverse, favorable, as well as the magnitude of impacts on the quality of the human environment were considered when analyzing the Proposed Action and the alternatives.

Comment: Commenters expressed opinions supporting one or more of the alternatives, or parts of the alternatives, and opinions disagreeing with one or more of the alternatives or parts of the alternatives.

Response: Most, but not all, of these comments were submitted as form letters or petitions. The majority of these comments were opinion statements and did not include data to show why an alternative or parts of an alternative were satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

Comment: The document should be modified to acknowledge model airplane flying on Meadowood Farm as an existing use prior to the BLM acquiring Meadowood Farm...the BLM took action to exclude activities on Meadowood Farm... description of existing facilities does not include recognition of the existing improved facility for flying control line model airplanes... model airplane flying has minimal impact on birds or wildlife... site used was not in proximity to wetlands... modify Table 2-1 to reflect suggested changes...there would be no adverse impacts to other users or resources at Meadowood Farm.

Response: It is acknowledged in Chapter 3, Recreation section, that control line model airplane flying was an existing use prior to the BLM acquiring the property. Motorized hobby use, which would include control line model airplane flying, is part of the Proposed Action. No data was found or presented which would preclude this activity from occurring on Meadowood Farm. Motorized hobby activities would not be limited to one organization or group of individuals but would be open to the general public at a designated time and place.

When the BLM acquired Meadowood Farm, a management decision to exclude certain activities and allow others to continue was made until planning could be completed. This decision was based on economic, logistical, cultural and natural resource considerations.

Comment: The term “motorized hobby” needs to be clarified... there needs to be an explanation of exactly what is permissible.

Response: A definition of the term “motorized hobby” as used in the Meadowood Farm PA/EA has been placed in the glossary. Motorized hobby means the use of any model that is not controlled by a remote device, is tethered, and is used for entertainment purposes only. The motor/engine used in the model must have a displacement of 1 cubic inch or less or an electric motor with an equivalent or less power rating.

Comment: The comment period on the Draft PA/EA should be extended.

Response: The BLM would have considered extending the comment period if new, highly controversial, or complex issues were identified during the comment period. However, no new issues meeting these criteria were submitted during the 30-day comment period.

## **Natural Environment**

### **Air**

Comment: Air pollution from model engines is not a factor and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has not regulated their use.

Response: No data was found that would indicate exhaust from model airplanes or individuals driving to Meadowood Farm would cause a measurable increase in the regulated pollutants identified by the EPA. (See discussion of Air Quality in Chapter 3)

Comment: Air should be added as the fifth essential component of a healthy ecosystem.

Response: Air has been added as a component of a healthy ecosystem.

### **Cultural**

Comment: The Mason Neck Peninsula is historically significant and additional information would be required prior to surface disturbing activities.

Response: On-the-ground pedestrian surveys to discover cultural resources have not been conducted on Meadowood Farm. In 2000, however, a literature search was conducted by Archeological Testing and Consulting Inc. of Silver Spring, Maryland. Based on that literature search, the BLM is aware of the probability of significant cultural resources on Meadowood Farm. The BLM will conduct pedestrian surveys and consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 before ground disturbing activities occur. However, the BLM has not developed an

implementation/activity plan for any site-specific activities on Meadowood Farm. This will occur after a land-use plan is adopted.

The BLM is aware of the historical importance of this area and especially of the Old Colchester Road, Washington/Rochambeau Route. Consideration of these resources will be documented when the BLM conducts a pedestrian survey. This survey will meet BLM Class III standards and Virginia Phase 1b standards.

Comment: BLM should contact county archeologists to determine the actual locations of sites on Mason Neck so they can be protected.

Response: BLM is required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 470 and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, 16 U.S.C. 470 aa, et seq. to consult with appropriate agencies before conducting surface disturbing activities.

Comment: A modest visitor center to enhance natural/cultural history interpretation may be needed.

Response: The type and size of a visitor center has not been decided at this time. Future development would be dependent on budgetary and staffing requirements. Specific natural/cultural objectives are to be addressed in an activity/implementation plan to be developed after a land-use plan has been approved. An activity/implementation plan is developed from the decisions made in the land-use plan.

Comment: Cultural and historic resources should be an important part of an environmental education, interpretive program on Mason Neck

Response: Cultural resources would be included as a part of the development of an environmental education program. Specific activities would be developed during the activity/implementation planning effort. Cultural resource surveys would be conducted before that time, to determine what themes are in the area and how they should be interpreted.

### **Visual Resources**

Comment: The attraction of Mason Neck is its beauty and nature. Maybe you can illustrate what a WH&B holding facility would look like.

Response: At this time no plans or architectural drawings have been developed for the construction of a WH&B holding facility. When developed, the design and location would be in accordance with VRM Class III (See discussion under Visual Resource Management in Chapter 4).



### **Soils**

- Comment: Concern was expressed about the potential of increasing soil erosion and siltation into streams.
- Response: All actions when implemented would include erosion control measures such as installation of drainage structures, and/or prompt reseeding of areas where vegetation would be removed or the soil surface disturbed. Site-specific measures would be developed during the implementation phase.
- Comment: There is severe erosion and undercutting in the stream beds and on the gravel horse trails.
- Response: The BLM is aware of the existing erosion problems on Meadowood Farm. Working in cooperation with the county we are in the process of developing measures to control these erosion areas.
- Comment: The use of the term Patapsco is not accurate when referring to Marine Clay soils. The more accurate description would be the term Steepland, Loamy and Gravelly Sediment or just refer to it as Marine Clay.
- Response: The use of the term Patapsco has been dropped when referring to the Marine Clay soil series.

### **Water Quality**

- Comment: Concern was expressed about water quality. These concerns were... more effluent from increased numbers of individuals and horses at the farm... increased sedimentation affecting fish distribution in Chesapeake Bay... correct existing erosion problems to prevent silt-laden runoff from entering Belmont Bay... there is no reference that BLM will comply with state or local environmental requirements such as the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act of 1988 and other regional or local regulations... current runoff from the Meadowood property has good to excellent water quality, this should be maintained or improved... practices that increase sedimentation and non-point source pollution would diminish, not increase the recreational value of Meadowood Farm.
- Response: The BLM would use Best Management Practices (see Chapter 2) in coordination with federal, state, and county standards to maintain high water quality standards on Meadowood Farm. These practices would meet or exceed the standards of Virginia's Coastal Resources program, Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act of 1988, and other regional and local statutes covering water quality. A coastal zone consistency review would be obtained prior to the start of surface disturbing or construction activities. In addition, the BLM would work cooperatively with the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District to develop a Soil and

Water Quality Conservation Plan that meets federal, state, regional and local standards.

### **Riparian/Wetlands**

Comment: The Resource Protection Area (RPA) map for Meadowood Farm is inaccurate.... Will the negative effects on the aquatic and riparian species be significant or insignificant?... Virginia has an ever-shrinking number of wetlands to fulfill natural filtration... the whole area of watershed and water quality management should be addressed... hope consideration will be given to not cut off one part of a creek from another part.

Response: Many of the comments received concerning riparian/wetlands were the same as those concerning water quality and were often part of the same comment. Therefore, refer back to the response to comments concerning water quality. The RPA map would be corrected through on-the-ground inventories and working with local agencies which have more accurate data. At this time no data has been collected or presented that would show that the Proposed Action would have unmanageable impacts on aquatic or riparian species. The BLM adheres to a policy of “no net loss” when managing wetlands and riparian areas. Further, the BLM will work with other agencies on the Mason Neck Peninsula to insure that its management actions consider watershed management. This would entail working cooperatively with other agencies to implement projects to improve water quality or protect riparian/wetland areas.

### **Ponds**

Comment: Comments related to the ponds on the property were concerned either with the availability of public fishing opportunities or the overall management of ponds on Meadowood Farm.

Response: The BLM is committed to maintaining all wetland/riparian ecosystems in a healthy, functioning condition.

### **Wildlife**

#### **General**

Comment: Motorized hobby use could affect wildlife populations... Northern Virginia Control Line built and maintained birdhouses; birds nested in the bird houses and were not disturbed by model airplane flying... increasing acreage for horse pasture would crowd out wildlife... quail, woodcock, and meadowlark were common in the area; the Lynch development of pasture put an end to the habitat these birds require... forest tree species should be encouraged to grow... management of wildlife and wildlife habitat needs to be coordinated with other state and public agencies... grasslands should be planted with native species and maintained as meadows... more detailed habitat descriptions are needed... establish preservation

of wildlife habitat as your highest management priority... migratory birds and their routes are an important part of Mason Neck wildlife.

**Response:** Meadowood Farm provides for the reproductive success of many species of wildlife. It is the BLM's intent to continue to provide for and in some cases increase the reproductive success of this diversity of wildlife species while implementing the proposed land uses in the Proposed Action. No data was found nor submitted that shows that land uses listed as part of the Proposed Action should not occur because of undue impacts on wildlife. Guidance for implementing these land uses are outlined in the wildlife habitat Best Management Practices in Chapter 2. Input for this guidance will come from resources such as the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and Web site information such as the Maryland Partners in Flight Web site. Inventory of flora and fauna on Meadowood Farm will be an ongoing process. As more information is obtained, it will be used to guide future land use decisions.

#### **Listed Species**

**Comment:** Listed species should be identified and measures to manage these species should be implemented.

**Response:** The BLM, as stated in Chapter 2, will take all measures to be in compliance with the Endangered Species Act. In addition, the BLM will take measures to protect and conserve all state-listed species. Further, it is Bureau policy to not adversely affect sensitive species or through its actions be responsible for the listing of a species. Prior to any new activities on Meadowood Farm, the BLM would conduct extensive inventories for state and federally listed and or sensitive species. Coordination of this program has already begun with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Should there be listed species encountered, the BLM, in coordination with both the state and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will modify any proposed action so that it will not adversely affect any listed sensitive species.

#### **Vegetation**

**Comment:** Comments on vegetation uniformly expressed a concern about management of vegetation (wildlife habitat) and visitor use (balanced use).

**Response:** Balanced use may be defined as "visitor use that does not compromise the diversity and health of the plant and animal species and their associated ecosystems found on Meadowood Farm." See Chapter 2 Standard Management Common to All Alternatives for the measures that will be followed to ensure there is balanced use.

**Forest**

Comment: Comments concerning forest management focused primarily on using caution when planning to manipulate forest vegetation through various silvicultural practices. Aggressive land-disturbing projects or logging were not preferred items.

Response: The BLM does not plan to conduct major forest harvesting practices. However, the BLM will take a pro-active approach to resolve issues such as insect infestations, diseases, and exotic invasive species in order to maintain and promote forest ecosystem health.

**Pastures**

Comment: Comments ranged from “no problem with alternatives of pasture expansion” to “pasture expansion should be very limited so as to minimize potential impacts to the environment.”

Response: The pasture allocations in the proposed action are based upon the “ideal situation” for private, domesticated horses. The BLM will take into careful consideration the potential impacts upon the adjacent habitats, the soils, and the water quality as the BLM locates and manages the WH&B adoption facility. As part of this, the BLM will establish and follow Best Management Practices for wildlife and wildlife habitat, and soil and water quality conservation.

**Hayfields**

Comment: Comments ranged from “maximize the native grassland establishment and management,” to “native grassland conversion should not be done for economic and environmental reasons”, and to “conduct more in depth studies to determine what to do.”

Response: The BLM has consulted various local, state, and federal sources and has determined that if the hayfield areas are maintained in a non-forested habitat state, conversion of the present vegetation to native grasses would be very positive for wildlife and vegetation diversity with a minimum exotic, invasive species risk. The BLM plans to take advantage of partnerships and experience with the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries for the optimum success of this management.

### **Invasive Species**

Comment: Concern was expressed about controlling exotic, invasive species, both plants and animals.

Response: The Bureau recognizes that Meadowood Farm is home to many exotic plants and animals (See Chapter 3). However, only exotic species considered invasive (See Chapter 3) by the USDA and the state of Virginia will be addressed and managed as exotic invasive species. Additional information obtained since the Draft PA/EA was released in May 2002 summarizes the exotics and exotic invasive species in Chapter 3.

### **Land Preservation**

Comment: Concern was expressed regarding the protection and preservation of resources at Meadowood Farm.

Response: The BLM will work to achieve its mission to “sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations” by employing the Secretary of the Interior’s “4 C’s” which are communication, consultation, cooperation, all in the service of conservation (Norton, 2001). BLM expects to provide safe, quality recreation opportunities while protecting the natural, cultural, and historic resources at Meadowood Farm.

### **Natural Environment Partnerships**

Comment: The BLM should actively seek assistance from the community and local government and educational institutions to identify plants and animals to assist with management of resources on Meadowood Farm.

Response: The BLM is and will continue to be involved in many informal and formal partnerships, which assisted in the resource assessment and planning on the Meadowood Farm property. Existing and continuing partnerships include those with George Mason University, Pohick Bay Regional Park, Mason Neck State Park, Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, and citizens of the surrounding areas.

## **Recreation**

### **Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS)**

Comment: The ROS classification for Meadowood Farm was “urban” but it should have been classified as “primitive.”

Response: The definition of the ROS classification of “primitive” can be found in Appendix B. The assigning of the “urban” classification was based on the relatively small size of Meadowood Farm, the relatively high population density of the nearby area, and that the sights and sounds of man are readily evident. Areas that are classed as primitive using the ROS criteria are at a minimum 5,000 acres in size.

**Intensity, Level of Use**

Comment: There was concern expressed about the long-term impacts associated with various recreation and other activities being considered for Meadowood Farm.

Response: Because demand and use numbers for activities at Meadowood Farm are unknown at this time, it is difficult to predict the long-term impacts associated with these activities. As discussed in several sections under the Recreation section of Chapter 4, BLM intends to monitor and evaluate impacts from various activities at Meadowood to establish thresholds for proper use levels. If the mitigating measures and established thresholds are ineffective, BLM would amend the Meadowood land-use plan to protect natural and cultural resources and the health and safety of recreational users.

**Motorized Passenger Use**

Comment: Comments were received regarding the use of motorized passenger vehicles at Meadowood Farm. The majority of these comments were opinion statements, many of which were expressed in petitions.

Response: Comments regarding motorized passenger use are addressed in the Trails - Motorized Passenger Use section under Recreation Resources in Chapter 4.

**Motorized Hobby Use**

Comment: Comments were received regarding motorized hobby use at Meadowood Farm. The majority of these comments were opinion statements, many of which were expressed in petitions and form letters.

Response: Data gathered at this time, coupled with input from specialists on the BLM Interdisciplinary Team (List of Preparers), indicates that motorized hobby activity use could occur at Meadowood Farm without seriously impacting other activities. Designated times and areas would be determined during the activity planning stage. More information on motorized hobby activities at Meadowood Farm can be found in the Trails-Motorized Hobby section under Recreation Resources in Chapter 4.

**Radio Control Model Airplane Use**

Comment: Comments were received regarding the inclusion of a flying site for radio control model aircraft at Meadowood.

Response: Based on documents provided by the Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA), it is unlikely that BLM could accommodate radio control model airplane flying at Meadowood Farm. Specifically, the 285 acres of overflight area suggested for radio control ("Radio Control Flying Site Suggestions", n.d.) and the 120 - 645 acres suggested for basic free flight facilities ("Aeromodeling Flying Sites Suggestions", n.d.) would need to be level and clear of obstacles. Additionally,

Herland (2002), Refuge Manager at the USFWS Shawangunk National Wildlife Refuge, indicates that frequent retrieval of free flight planes in areas adjacent to the flying site is expected. Also, free flight and radio control planes have the potential to crash and retrieval could occur anywhere on Meadowood and adjacent properties (Herland, 2002). According to the AMA figures, these activities would require approximately 15-80% of the Meadowood Farm parcel, which is not feasible based on other anticipated uses and adverse impacts to soils, wildlife, vegetation and other resources on site.

#### **Non-motorized Passenger Use (Bicycles)**

Comment: Concern was expressed about non-motorized passenger vehicles regarding safety on trails, use conflicts/compatibility, and environmental impacts.

Response: Management actions for this potential use are described in the Trails - Non-motorized Passenger use section under Recreation Resources in Chapter 4.

#### **Swimming**

Comment: Would swimming be allowed on Meadowood Farm?

Response: As noted in Standard Management Common to All Alternatives, swimming would not be allowed in any body of water on Meadowood Farm.

#### **Trails – Pedestrian**

Comment: Comments were received regarding pedestrian use and safety on trails, and connection of trails on the Mason Neck Peninsula.

Response: These comments are addressed in the Trails - Pedestrian use section under Recreation Resources in Chapter 4, and under the Multi-Use Trails public comment response below.

#### **Multi-use Trails**

Comment: Interest was expressed in the connection of Meadowood Farm trails (pedestrian and equestrian) with other multi-use trails on the Mason Neck Peninsula.

Response: As indicated in Chapter 4, additional trails could be constructed where the resource can support the activity. If feasible, BLM would partner with other agencies on the Peninsula in efforts to provide expanded recreation opportunities that would be safe and sustainable. Comments regarding pedestrian and equestrian use of trails are addressed in the Trails sections in Chapter 4 under Recreation Resources.

### **Camping**

Comment: Interest was expressed in camping on Meadowood Farm.

Response: Comments received regarding camping use at Meadowood Farm are addressed in the Camping section under Recreation Resources in Chapter 4.

### **Fishing**

Comment: There was an expression of support for recreational public fishing opportunities at Meadowood Farm.

Response: Under the Proposed Action, BLM would allow public fishing.

### **Hunting**

Comment: There was an expression of interest or wanting to know the status of hunting on Meadowood Farm.

Response: See Number 17 under the Standard Management Common to All Alternatives in Chapter 2. BLM does not anticipate recreational hunting at Meadowood on a regular basis. However, it might be necessary, at times, to reduce the overpopulation of certain species of wildlife. At the time of printing, BLM has not determined if the population reduction would be carried out by trained wildlife staff, or if a limited permit system would be implemented for the public. BLM anticipates that while wildlife population reduction is taking place, part or all of Meadowood would have limited entry, or would be closed to other recreation activities. Additionally, BLM would attempt to coordinate population control efforts with other land managers on Mason Neck to optimize success.

### **Dog Park**

Comment: Portions of Meadowood Farm should be designated a Dog Park.

Response: Under the Proposed Action, BLM would not provide an off-leash dog park at Meadowood Farm. However, BLM might allow visitors to bring their dogs to Meadowood Farm. Certain restrictions would be established to minimize impacts from this activity, and to maintain public and animal safety.

### **Wildlife Viewing**

Comment: Will wildlife watching or a watchable wildlife program be implemented at Meadowood Farm?

Response: BLM anticipates that wildlife watching would occur at Meadowood as part of organized environmental education programs, as well as on an individual basis. Management actions, including use restrictions and other mitigating measures at Meadowood Farm, would be expected to provide long-term wildlife watching opportunities.



### **Recreation-related Partnerships**

Comment: Comments were received regarding BLM's potential participation in recreation-related partnerships.

Response: BLM expects to explore partnerships that could help provide expanded recreation opportunities while not duplicating offerings on the Peninsula. These partnerships would be established to provide the best possible recreation opportunities to the public. Some examples of potential partnerships could include connecting trails, as discussed in Chapter 4, under Trails - Pedestrian and Trails – Equestrian in the Recreation section.

### **Economic and Social**

Comment: A thorough analysis of demographic (needs assessment) should be performed to determine how to best serve citizens within the service area.

Response: A demographic (needs assessment) is outside the scope of the land-use plan. However, the BLM has held public meetings and requested input from individuals living in the Lorton and Mason Neck vicinity. That input has helped the BLM throughout the planning process.

Comment: There were comments concerning the economics of control line model airplane flying and horse boarding/equestrian activity in Alternative 2.

Response: While approved use or non use of Meadowood Farm for model airplane flying or horse boarding/equestrian activity could impact some individual hobby and equestrian related businesses, there would be negligible employment and income impacts (as a percentage of county totals) in Fairfax County from reduced or increased consumer purchases associated with these activities

Comment: “Moreover, the stable generates revenue that helps the federal government maintain the property as a whole, thus saving the taxpayer money.”

Response: The economics of boarding privately owned horses will be periodically reviewed to assure that there is a fair monetary return to the American taxpayers. See discussion in Chapter 4, Economic and Social Impact Section, pertaining to the Proposed Action and Alternative 4.

Comment: Interest was expressed in BLM's proposed land uses and vehicle traffic in the area.

Response: Traffic concerns pertaining to the Proposed Action and Alternative 4 are addressed in the Economic and Social Impact Section of Chapter 4.

## **Equines**

**Comment:** Comments were received supporting continued use of Meadowood Farm for horses and equestrian activities. These comments were opinion statements expressed by individuals and in petitions. However, the opinions differed greatly in their recommendations on how equestrian activities should be conducted. Several comments pointed out the need for additional equestrian facilities open to the general public and groups such as 4-H clubs.

**Response:** Under the Proposed Action, BLM would continue to manage portions of Meadowood Farm for horses and equestrian use. BLM would provide new opportunities for individuals and groups to enjoy equestrian activities.

### **Boarding**

**Comment:** Comments were received expressing both support for and opposition to the boarding of privately owned horses. These comments were opinion statements made by individuals and in petitions. Concern was expressed that use of Meadowood Farm by private individuals would interfere with use of the facility for public benefit.

**Response:** Under the Proposed Action, BLM would allow boarding to continue. This use would be monitored to ensure that it does not interfere with other public uses of Meadowood Farm and that the boarding operation would generate a fair monetary return to the American taxpayers.

### **Wild Horses and Burros (WH&B)**

**Comment:** The BLM should use the property only for BLM's original intent, as a WH&B adoption facility.

**Response:** The BLM's mission is based on sound multiple use management of the lands and resources it administers. No data was presented or found that showed the Bureau's WH&B program could not coexist with other horse-related uses or provide opportunities for equestrian-related partnerships. Further, the authorizing legislation transferring the property to the BLM stated that Meadowood Farm should be managed for "recreation and public purposes." Therefore, the use of Meadowood Farm to highlight the Bureau's WH&B Program, in conjunction with many other activities, is part of the Proposed Action.

**Comment:** Clarification was requested on the static population of animals to be maintained, and how a WH&B facility would be constructed.

**Response:** In the Proposed Action, BLM envisions an average of 25 WH&Bs to be present on Meadowood Farm on a permanent basis. These animals would be available for

adoption by appointment during normal working hours unless special arrangements would be made.

Comment: What would construction of a WH&B facility entail?

Response: No site-specific architectural drawing or plans have been developed for a WH&B facility at Meadowood Farm. However, such a facility would at a minimum consist of a barn with corrals so that animals could be viewed from outside the barn and from a central walkway inside the barn. The fencing for the corrals would be either metal pipe fence panels or wooden panels, and would be at least 6 feet high. The facility would also consist of load-in and load-out chutes and parking areas.

Comment: What is an adoption event, what would it involve, and how many people would attend?

Response: An adoption event is a scheduled day(s) where the public could apply to adopt, and if approved, adopt WH&Bs. Generally these events are scheduled to occur on weekends. Estimating the number of people that might attend an adoption event is difficult in the Mason Neck area because it is in close proximity to a major metropolitan area. People would come to adopt and some people (sightseers) would want to see a WH&B from the western range lands. The BLM anticipates that as more adoption events would be held, the number of adopters and the number of "sightseers" attending would decrease and stabilize.

### **Partnerships**

Comment: Comments were received expressing both support for and opposition to equestrian partnerships. These comments were opinion statements made by individuals and in form letters and petitions.

Response: BLM anticipates that equestrian partnerships at Meadowood Farm would be developed. The partnerships would be considered by BLM on a case-by-case basis and would be evaluated on the basis of what would be in the best interest of the BLM and its programs, groups and organizations, and in the general public interest.

### **Trail Use**

Comment: Comments were received in support of public riding trails being developed at Meadowood Farm. Many of these comments stressed the importance of trail development being tied into existing equestrian trails on adjacent lands.

Response: As indicated under the Recreation section in the Proposed Action, public use equestrian trails would be developed. Trails would be constructed so as to

minimize erosion or other adverse impacts to resources. Trails would be constructed in cooperation with other groups and/or public agencies.

## **Environmental Education**

Comment: There were no substantive comments regarding environmental education. However, there was interest expressed in the resource values to be addressed in environmental education programs, the use of partnerships, the creation of additional facilities/structures, and possible conflicts with boarders' access to the barn.

Response: Environmental education at Meadowood Farm would be partnership-based, drawing on public, private, and non-profit relationships. It would utilize existing structures as much as possible and would address the full range of resource values found on the property.

## **List of Preparers**

The Meadowood Farm Proposed Planning Analysis/Environmental Assessment was prepared by a team of specialists from the Eastern States Office, Jackson Field Office, Milwaukee Field Office, and the Washington Office - Assistant Directorate of Renewable Resources and Planning and the National Science and Technology Center. The members of this team are:

Clay Moore, Meadowood Planning Team Lead. Natural Resource Manager. B.S. Forest Management, University of Montana, Missoula. Twenty-nine years with U.S. Government. Responsible for recreation, air, soil, and water resources sections.

H. Singh Ahuja, Physical Scientist. M.S. Geology, Northeastern University of Illinois, Chicago. Twenty-four years with U.S. Government. Responsible for Hazardous Materials sections.

Loren Cabe, Economist. M.S. Economics, University of Washington, Seattle. Thirty years with the U.S. Government. Responsible for the Socioeconomic section.

Victoria Josupait, Recreation Planner. M.S. Recreation Administration, Aurora University, Aurora, Illinois. Three years with the Bureau of Land Management. Responsible for the Recreation section, and incorporation of public comments in this area.

Jinx Fox, Wild Horse and Burro Program Manager. M.S. Geology, Eastern Kentucky University. Seventeen years with U.S. Government. Responsible for Wild Horse and Burro and Equestrian related sections.

Lars Johnson, Geologist. M.S. Geology, Texas A & M University, College Station. Nine years with U.S. Government. Responsible for Minerals sections.

Judith Pace, Archaeologist. M.A. Anthropology, University of Mississippi, Oxford. Fifteen years with U.S. Government. Responsible for Cultural Resources and Native American sections.

Bob Schoolar, GIS Specialist. B.S. Geophysical Science, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia. Twenty-five years with U.S. Government. Responsible for all aspects of map production.

Geoffrey Walsh, Wildlife Management Biologist. Eastern States Natural Resources Programs Lead. B.S. Wildlife Management/Zoology, Humboldt State University, California. Seventeen years with U.S. Government. Responsible for Wildlife Habitat, Threatened and Endangered Species, Fisheries, Riparian, Exotic Invasive Species, and parts of Recreation sections.

Terry Lewis, Chief, Office of External Affairs, Eastern States. M.A. English, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. Twenty-three years with U.S. Government. Responsible for document editing, formatting and production.

## References Cited

Academy of Model Aeronautics. no date. *Radio Control Flying Site Suggestions*. Muncie, IN: Academy of Model Aeronautics.

Bulmar, Walt. 2002. *Interim Report on Herptiles and Mammals Surveyed at Meadowood Farm* (Draft).

Chapin, Dave, personal communication.

Chavez, D.J., and J. Hoyer. 1998. Conflict and management tactics on the trail. *Parks & Recreation*, September, 41-49.

Colorado Parks & Recreation Association. no date. *The Benefits are Endless*. Colorado: Colorado Lottery.

Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Conservation and Recreation. 1996. *Virginia Outdoors Plan 1996*. Richmond, VA.

Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Conservation and Recreation. 2002. *Virginia Outdoors Plan: Our Commonwealth*. Richmond, VA.

Cooper, Jeff. Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. March 2002 and August 7, 2002. personal communication.

Davis, J.G., and A.M. Swinker. 1996. *Horse Manure Management*, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension, Livestock Series No. 1.219.

EDAW, Inc., Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc., EHT Tracerics, Inc., Larry Johnson. November 1999. *Natural Resources Inventory and Existing Conditions Assessment Report for Pohick Bay Regional Park* (Draft). Retrieved September 10, 2000 from <http://www.nvrpa.org/pohick/index.html>

Froelich, A.J. 1985. Maps showing surficial geologic and hydrologic aspects of the Coastal Plain in Fairfax County and vicinity, Virginia Sheet 1 of 5. *Folio of Geologic and Hydrologic Maps for Land-use Planning in the Coastal Plain of Fairfax County and Vicinity, Virginia*. U.S. Geologic Survey, Miscellaneous Investigation Series map I-1423 (Sheet 1 of 5).

Herland, E.A. 2002. *Shawangunk Grasslands National Wildlife Refuge: Compatibility Determination*. Retrieved July 1, 2002, from <http://shawangunk.fws.gov/CD.html>.

Hill, Phillip J, Cynthia L. Pfanstiehl, Colin F. Beaven, Brandon Grodnitzky, and William D. Battles. 2000. *A Phase I Archeological Survey of the Lorton Exchange Tract and an Archeological Potential Assessment of the Meadowood Farm Property: Two Study Areas*

*Located in Fairfax County, Virginia.* 3 Volumes. Prepared by Archeological Testing and Consulting, Inc., Silver Spring, Maryland. Prepared for Bureau of Land Management, Jackson Field Office, Jackson, Mississippi.

Lovelace, Dan. Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. March 2002 and Aug. 7, 2002. personal communication.

Maryland Partners in Flight. 1998. *Land Management Guidelines for the Benefit of Land Birds in Maryland*. Retrieved May 14, 2002, from <http://www.mdbirds.org/mdpif/lmg.html>.

National Park Service, Great Smoky Mountains National Park. 1995. *A Strategic Plan for Managing Backcountry Recreation in Great Smoky Mountains National Park*. Gatlinburg, TN.

Natural Resources Conservation Services. 2002. *Plants Data Base*. Retrieved Aug. 20, 2002, from <http://plants.usda.gov>.

Niccolucci, M. J., A. E. Watson, D. R. Williams. 1994. The Nature of Conflict Between Hikers and Recreational Stock Users in the John Muir Wilderness. *Journal of Leisure Research*, Vol. 26, No. 4, 372-385.

Norton, G A. 2001. At Six Months: Secretary Norton's "4 C's" *Making Positive Impact*. Retrieved, Aug. 9, 2002, from <http://www.doi.gov/news/010731.html>

Odenkirk, John Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. May 15, 2002, and Aug. 7, 2002. personal communication.

O'Keefe, E., and C. Prescott. 2000. A Neighborly Approach to R/C Airfield Sound Management. *R/C Modeler Magazine*, June, 66-76.

O'Sullivan, E. 1999. Circling in on the Benefits. *Setting a Course for Change: The Benefits Movement* (pp. 31-33). Ashburn, VA: National Recreation & Park Association.

O'Sullivan, E. 1999. Moving Towards Awareness. *Setting a Course for Change: The Benefits Movement* (pp. 16-18). Ashburn, VA: National Recreation & Park Association.

Seiders, V. M. 1981. *Geologic Map of the Occoquan Quadrangle and part of the Fort Belvoir Quadrangle*, Prince William and Fairfax Counties, Virginia. U.S. Geologic Survey Miscellaneous Investigation Series map I-1175.

Sweet, P.C. 1983. *Mineral Industries and Resources of Virginia*. Map 1=500,000. Department of Conservation and Economic Development Division of Mineral Resources, Commonwealth of Virginia.

Sweet, P. C., and J. E. Nolde. 1997. *Coals, Oil, and Gas and Industrial and Metallic Minerals Industries in Virginia, 1995*: Virginia Division of Mineral Resources, Publication 146.

Taylor, G. E. Jr., H. Wolf, G. Walsh, D. Wong, Garnet and J. Sevanick 2002. *Resource Assessment at Meadowood Farm, Virginia*. (Draft) George Mason University.

Virginia Division of Mineral Resources 2000. Geology Website, *Atlantic Coastal Plain* <http://minerals.usgs.gov/minerals/pubs/state/985199mp.pdf>.

Virginia Natural Heritage Program. no date. *Invasive Alien Plant Species of Virginia*. Retrieved Jan. 17, 2002, from <http://www.dcr.state.va.us/dnh/pdflist.htm>.

Witt, Joe. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mason Neck National Wildlife Refuge. May 17, 2000. personal communication.

Wood Wilford. Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District. Aug. 2, 2002. personal communication.